



[Billing Code:4710-09]

## **DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

[Public Notice:9171]

### **NOTIFICATION OF THE NEXT CAFTA-DR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL MEETING**

**AGENCY:** Department of State

**ACTION:** Notice of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Affairs Council Meeting and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of State and the Office of the United States Trade Representative are providing notice that the parties to the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) intend to hold the ninth meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council (Council) established under Chapter 17 (Environment) of that agreement in Guatemala City, Guatemala on July 9-10. The Council will meet on July 9 to review implementation of Chapter 17 of CAFTA-DR and the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA). All interested persons are invited to attend the Council's public session beginning at 9:30 a.m. on July 10 at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. During the Council meeting, Council Members will present the progress made and challenges in implementing Chapter 17 obligations and the impacts of

environmental cooperation in their respective countries. The Council will also receive a presentation from the CAFTA-DR Secretariat for Environmental Matters (SEM). More information on the Council is included below under Supplementary Information.

All interested persons are invited to attend a public session where they will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss implementation of Chapter 17 and the Environmental Cooperation Agreement with Council Members. At the public session, the Council hopes to receive input from the public on current environmental challenges and ideas for future cooperation. The Department of State and Office of the United States Trade Representative also invite written comments or suggestions regarding topics to be discussed at the meeting. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR, the Final Environmental Review of the CAFTA-DR, and the Agreement among the CAFTA-DR countries on Environmental Cooperation (ECA) (*all documents available at <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/caftadr/index.htm>*).

**DATES:** The public session of the Council will be held on July 10, 2015, from 9:30 AM – 12:15 PM at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala. We request comments and suggestions in writing no later than June 26, 2015.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments or suggestions should be submitted to both:

(1) Eloise Canfield, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues by e-mail to [CanfieldM2@state.gov](mailto:CanfieldM2@state.gov) with the subject line “CAFTA-DR EAC Meeting” or by fax to (202) 647-5947; and

(2) Laura Buffo, Director for Environment and Natural Resources, Office of the United States Trade Representative by e-mail to [Laura\\_Buffo@ustr.eop.gov](mailto:Laura_Buffo@ustr.eop.gov) with the subject line “CAFTA-DR EAC Meeting” or by fax to (202) 395-9517.

If you have access to the Internet you can view and comment on this notice by going to: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!home> and searching on docket number DOS-XXXX-XXXX.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Eloise Canfield, (202) 647-4750 or Laura Buffo, 202-395-9424

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Article 17.5 of the CAFTA-DR establishes an Environmental Affairs Council (the Council) and requires it to meet annually unless the CAFTA-DR parties otherwise agree to oversee the implementation of, and review progress under, Chapter 17. Article 17.5 further requires, unless the parties otherwise agree, that each meeting of the Council include a session in which members of the Council have an opportunity to meet with the public to discuss matters relating to the implementation of Chapter 17.

In Article 17.9, the parties recognize the importance of strengthening capacity to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development in concert with strengthening trade and investment relations and state their commitment to expanding their cooperative relationship on environmental matters. Article 17.9 also references the ECA, which sets out certain priority areas of cooperation on environmental activities that are also reflected in Annex 17.9 of the CAFTA-DR. These priority areas include, among other things: reinforcing institutional and legal frameworks and the capacity to develop, implement, administer, and enforce environmental laws, regulations, standards and policies; conserving and managing shared, migratory and endangered species in international trade and management of protected areas; promoting best practices leading to sustainable management of the environment; and facilitating technology development and transfer and training to promote clean production technologies.

If you would like to attend the public session, please notify Eloise Canfield at the email addresses listed above under the heading ADDRESSES. Please include your full name and identify any organization or group you represent. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to:

- Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR,
- The Final Environmental Review of CAFTA-DR, and
- The ECA.

These documents are available at:

<http://www.state.gov/e/oes/eqt/trade/caftadr/index.htm>. Visit

<http://www.state.gov> and the USTR website at [www.ustr.gov](http://www.ustr.gov) for more information.

Dated: June 15, 2015.

Deborah Klepp,  
Director,  
Office of Environmental Quality and  
Transboundary Issues,  
U.S. Department of State.

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